

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BARCEL 00553 251555Z

44

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-02 FAA-00 LAB-04 SIL-01

OC-06 CCO-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 /094 W
----- 119122

R 241400Z AUG 76

FM AMCONSUL BARCELONA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3572

INFO AMCONSUL BILBAO

AMEMBASSY MADRID 3572

AMCONSUL SEVILLE 042

UNCLAS BARCELONA 0553

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, SP

SUBJECT: AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS SLOWDOWN

1. A WORK SLOWDOWN IS BEING STAGED BY THE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS AT THE BARCELONA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND SEVERAL OTHER AIRPORTS IN SPAIN. REPORTEDLY THE CONTROLLERS ARE HANDLING TRAFFIC IN STRICT ACCORDANCE WITH WORK RULES. MANY FLIGHTS BOTH IN AND OUT OF BARCELONA ARE EXPERIENCING DELAYS UP TO SEVERAL HOURS, CAUSING DIFFICULTIES FOR MANY PASSENGERS.

2. THE RECENTLY INAUGURATED TWA FLIGHT FROM BARCELONA TO NEW YORK VIA MADRID HAS ALSO BEEN AFFECTED. ON SATURDAY AUG. 21 AND TUESDAY AUG. 24, TWA CANCELLED THE FLIGHT. ON THOSE DAYS THE FLIGHT ORIGINATED IN MADRID INSTEAD OF BARCELONA. THE PASSENGERS FROM BARCELONA WERE ROUTED TO MADRID ON AN IBERIA SHUTTLE FLIGHT. TWA MIGHT DO THE SAME FOR IT WEDNESDAY FLIGHT.

3. THE CAUSE OF THE SLOWDOWN IS A DEMAND BY THE AIR
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PAGE 02 BARCEL 00553 251555Z

TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS FOR HIGHER PAY. IT IS NOT KNOWN

HOW LONG IT MIGHT LAST BUT IF PROLONGED COULD HAVE
AN ECONOMIC IMPACT. THE SLOWDOWN IS TAKING PLACE DURING
THE HEIGHT OF THE AUGUST VACATION PERIOD. UNFORTUNATELY
FOR THE TOURIST INDUSTRY IT IS OCCURING DURING A TOURIST
SEASON THAT IS SEEING A DECLINE FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR
IN THE NUMBER OF TOURISTS ARRIVING FROM ABROAD. THE
DECREASE IN TOURISTS IS ATTRIBUTED TO THE GENERALLY
HIGH RATE OF INFLATION IN SPAIN IN CONJUNCTION WITH
THE RECENT JUMP IN HOTEL RATES WHICH IN SOME CASES
REACHED 20 PERCENT. UNCERTAINTY ABOUT AIR TRAVEL MIGHT
FURTHER DISCOURAGE TOURISTS.

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